Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News

JULY/AUGUST 1997

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Moto Musing

Gino Pokluda

Wish-list

It was the typical scenario, late night in the garage, cup of coffee in one hand, wrench in the other , country station on the radio and a bike on the lift. In this particular "Gino Pokluda Therapy Session", it was the project KLX650 that was under the "knife". I was in the process of putting the KLX back together after having it pretty much dismantled over the past month, when I caught myself comparing the bike to other bikes that have endured down time on my Handi-Lift. " I sure wish they (Kawasaki) made the preload adjuster like the one on the KLR650". It was a seemingly endless conversation with myself of "I wish this and I wish that". That is when I got the idea for the "wish list".

Over the years, I have had a number of bikes take up residence in my garage and most, if not all of them have had my wrench applied to them and, over time, I began to find what I liked and disliked about each and everyone of them. So on that warm starry evening with June bugs pinging against the fluorescent lights of my garage, I got the idea to create a "wish-list" for the KLR650. A list of those little things that Kawasaki could do to the KLR650 that would bring it up to date and prepare it for another long run into the next century.

So who will create this list? Funny you should ask, because you are the ones who will send in your ideas which, in turn, I will forward to John Hoover, Marketing and Sales Director, of Kawasaki Motor Corporation, USA. Your list should be composed of three parts; a prioritized list of items you would like to see changed on future KLR650's with 1 being the most important to you, a list of items that you DO NOT want changed on the KLR650, and the last part is the opportunity to indulge your creative juices and tell Kawasaki what the ultimate dual sport bike would be for you. KLX650 and Tengai owners are probably feeling left out here, but please send your ideas in also, even if it is just a note saying "Bring back the Tengai" or "I want a KLX650 again" in bold red letters.

So on that warm starry evening with June bugs pinging against the fluorescent lights of my garage, I got the idea to create a "wish-list" for the KLR650.

So for beginners, here's my list as an example. Send your list to **K650DSN, Wish List, PO BOX 698, Sandia Park, NM 87047** or e-mail to **K650DSN@aol.com** with **Wish List** in the **subject** line. Hope to hear from you all soon.

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…Wish-list

(Continued from page 1)

Gino's wish list for the KLR650:

1. Twin piston front brake with larger rotor.
2. Larger diameter fork tubes and fully adjustable front suspension
3. Locknut and screw adjustable valves.
4. Center stand
5. Lowering kit
6. Firmer foam in seat
7. Seat that can removed without having to take side covers off.
8. Concentric rear axle adjusters from KLR600.
9. Kick starter and electric standard.

Things NOT to change

1. Fuel tank size (make it bigger if you want)
2. Size and width of seat.
3. Luggage rack (make it bigger if you want)
4. Spacious ergonomics

Dream KLR650

1. KLX650 frame
2. KLX650 engine with 3 liter oil capacity
3. Twin radiators
4. Conventional, fully adjustable front fork with 10 inches travel
5. Fully adjustable rear shock with 10 inches of travel
6. 6 gallon fuel tank
7. No fairing standard, with optional twin headlight frame mounted fairing available
8. Flat wide seat with multi density foam
9. Center stand.

When writing your wish-list, be careful what you ask for, you might just get it. Ask many BMW GS riders who previously owned R80GS and early R100GS bikes. They will unanimously tell you that the R1100GS was not what they had in mind when they asked for a better GS.

So get those brain cells working and tell Kawasaki what the better KLR should be like.

Four Corners Touring

Ed King

My riding partners Ron & Karl Kellner, Dennis Richards, and I decided to do a 50th birthday event by doing a 2700 mile, 4 states loop of Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming & Utah on KLR 650s. Ron has related details of the route in FSSNOC and K65ODSN. Due to snow closures, Engineers, Medano and Guanella were the only "dual sport" passes we were able to negotiate. I would like to concentrate on hardware and accessory modifications made on my KLR in preparation for, and as a result of this ride.

One ride on the stock tires on my slightly used KLR convinced me better tires would be essential for extended amounts of unpaved riding in Colorado. Ron had used Pirelli MT21's on previous KLRS, and had experienced their superior off road performance, but at an unacceptable price in durability. They would never make the 2700-2800 mile route, especially when significant high speed paved sections were to be encountered.

He went back to the very durable and $$ Metzeler Saharas. They proved extremely capable, including a loop of the White Rim trail in Utah in July at 120 degrees Fahrenheit. The overall tire mileage on the Metzelers was about 6000 miles. I guess you get what you pay for.

I opted, due to paranoia, price and limited off road experience with the KLR, for a more off road oriented tire combination. I settled on a Continental TKC80 on the rear and a Bridgestone EDO I on the front. The set ended up less than half the price of the Metzelers, and lasted about 5500 miles. Although they had a fairy aggressive knobby tread, they were capable of some fairly serious lean angles on paved twisties. The only problem with the tire setup was that late in the ride, the front forks got a little snakey above 80, partially due to cupping of the knobs by heavy front brake usage on the pavement, aggravated by the fork springs sacking out after a pounding they took going up and over Engineers pass.

Since the TKC80 was somewhat taller than the stock tire, and to compensate for loss of power at altitude, the total weight of rider and luggage, and insurance for lugging along in first gear, I dropped one tooth on the countershaft sprocket. I thought it was worthwhile, and the difference in mileage compared to the other KLRs was indistinguishable. On the

UPDATES

Buyer Beware

I must regretfully advise everyone who reads this newsletter to steer clear of Capital Cycle. In my last conversation with the owner, I was left with the impression that things would be turning around for the parts and accessories importer. That, however has not been the case. I have been unable to contact the owner for well over two months now and have received a number of calls and letters from K650DSN subscribers that are in the process of filing legal claims in order to get refunds on products purchased but never received.

Dual Star Gears Up

Mike Walburn has told me that by the time you read this, the long awaited KLR650 centerstand will be available as well as other products aimed at the adventure tourer, such as the slick co-pilot bar bag that doubles as a map holder and fanny pack. Mike assures

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me that the center stand will be able to handle anything the KLR rider can dish out and that the unit will be made in two sizes, one for the stock KLR650 and a shorter one for the lowered KLR's. Mike also wanted me to pass on that he will be on a long vacation this summer, so don't think Dual Star has closed up shop. Just keep trying. Dual Star (206)776-7433

Riky Center Stand

For those that like a little choice in life, Riky Products also makes a center stand for the KLR650 and Tengai. The stand is made in only one size for both bikes. The one I mounted on my KLR650 will lift the rear tire about an inch. The stand is well made and fits nicely if not a little tight on the bike. You can reach M&P at 011 44 990 703030. Be advised that if the stand is not in stock, it would take about 6 to 8 weeks to receive and then 4 weeks to arrive at your door.

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.....Four Corners

topic of sprockets, BEWARE! There have been a number of running changes in the design of the counter shaft sprockets on KLRs. Make sure you get the right one. Also, beware of cheap sprockets. The first one I mail ordered looked like it had been chewed out of old beer cans by a drunken beaver. Absolute JUNK. I finally ended up with a PBI sprocket from Cycle Concepts (805)252-7819. Yes, you can buy quality at a reasonable price.

The next project was carburetor improvements. Ron had spent the big $$ for a Dyno jet kit. It was a huge improvement, especially at idle, off-idle, and up to 1/2 throttle. I feel I accomplished equivalent carburetion for about $12.00. I went to a 148 main jet, and a 40 slow jet (all available from Kawasaki). The installation is a bear, as I wanted to remove the carb to make revisions to the sealed idle mixture screw. You basically have to break the bike in half at the rear subframe to get the carb off.

With the carb in hand, CAREFULLY drill an appropriately sized hole in the mixture screw plug. Run in a hardened sheet metal screw, and pull the plug. Carefully seat the mixture jet (they are usually only an eighth or sixteenth of a turn out!) Then back it out to 1.5 or 2 turns. Then swap out the main & slow jet, check the float level, and replace the phillips head bowl screws with socket heads. Then, on the trail, with a couple of allen wrenches, and a small socket, it is possible to rejet the main down to a 145 or less for 8 or 10,000 feet with a minimum hassle. A worthwhile addition is a K&N gauze filter. Be forewarned however, that early K&N's had a separate metal cap that did not fit well on the filter. Both the cap end and the carburetor side of the filter must seal well or you'll suck in all kinds of dirt. I use a laboratory grade silicone vacuum grease to seal it, K&N sells a similar product. I think K&N has since redesigned the filter with a built in cap so it fits better.

Throttle response is much crisper with the above modifications. I also think an ultra premium fine wire platinum spark plug like a Nippondenso "ZU" improves low speed off idle performance, and luggability.

Here's a list of other one-liners on KLR prep:

1. Locktite every nut and bolt with the blue medium strength variety. Especially the upper engine brackets buried under the tank, the rear rack bolts into the frame, and the fasteners on the radiator shrouds. Be very sparing on the locktite on M6 and smaller screws, and anything into aluminum. I also have a thing about replacing any phillips head with a hex head or socket head fastener.

2. Regardless of what other people say, trash the sidestand switch, and short circuit the leads. Know how to adjust, and or short across the clutch lever switch. If you whack the hand protector on a tree or in a fall, the clutch lever switch will break, and you will not be able to restart it at all without shorting things out. If you are lucky, and the switch only requires readjustment, it can always be jockeyed around to get it to start in neutral with the clutch out. I carry a credit card sized multimeter, a copy of the wiring schematic, a small phillips, and a paper clip to hot wire it if you're stranded in the middle of nowhere.

3. The Russell stainless front brake hose is wonderful for improving brake feel. However, it is too long, has to be covered or else it will file away anything it touches, and really needs a plastic bushing to properly attach it to the fork leg bracket. Bleed it several times. You won't believe how firm the brake lever feels. I tried Velvetouch pads, and felt they were excellent. I have yet to find a brand of rear pads that have a good feel. Any Suggestions? Any experience with a stainless rear brake line?

4. 1 paid top $ for the maintenance free sealed battery. No more dead battery because it ran low on water, and no problems in a tipover. I personally think $60 for a premium battery is better insurance than a +$125 kickstart conversion from Canada.

5. Stick with Kawasaki or Fram oil filters and synthetic oil. The Frams are cheaper but hard to find, and my oil choice is Castrol Syntec 2OW50. The engine seems to run much quieter on Castrol than Mobil 1. Also get a magnetic drain plug. You won't believe the crud the magnet will get that the filter doesn't.

6. I made a telescoping sidestand that goes into the right side footpeg for propping the bike up for an emergency rear tire repair. If anyone is interested, I can supply a sketch. For use in the garage at home, I fabricated a bracket that mounts onto a Target or K-Mart I ton floor jack. It makes tire changing much more pleasant.

7. Gino, what are the real dimensions (OD) on the Tengai front and rear rotors? I know the whole front slider on the Tengai fork is unique and $$$$$, but what about the rear

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... Four Corners

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caliper bracket? I'm sure I'm not the only guy interested in upgrading/improving the brakes on the KLR. From some European magazine articles on KLRs & Tengais, the Euro versions have rotors even bigger than the Tengai. I can share that info if anyone is interested.

8. After Colorado I replaced the fork springs with Progressive springs. Went to 420cc of 10w oil. What an improvement! If you want REALLY nice forks, go with the gold valves. Ron has them on his KLR and they are spectacular! They suck up the little stuff, but yet will take some tremendous hits that would totally collapse the stock forks. Has anyone installed them on a KLR themselves? It supposedly requires machine work, but I have never heard the details or seen a set of installation instructions.

Ed,

I have never heard of Gold Valves for the KLR, but I guess there are some and they work great. Steve Johnson has them on his KLX650 and they are real nice. I'm not sure of the Tengai front brake dimensions, but I do know that it is an expensive proposition to get that setup on the KLR as you have to buy a set of Tenagi fork legs to make it work. -Ed.

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Center Stand Notes

It seems like we have been talking about center stands for a year now, and some folks have expressed confusion. So, to clear up the confusion, here is the straight scoop on center stand availability.

Dual Star makes separate center stands for the KLR650, KLR650 lowered, and Tengai. Specify which bike you have when ordering.
208-776-7433

M&P offers a stand from Ricky products. That will fit the KLR650, KLR650 lowered, and Tengai. M&P is located in the UK and can be reached at 011-44-990-703030. Part number for that stand is RC520L. Allow up to 8 weeks for delivery. M&P takes Visa credit cards.

Capital Cycle is no longer a recommended option.

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Time to Renew

Hard to believe that K650DSN has made it through a whole year and now it is time for some of you to renew. If your mailing label has **RENEW** in the upper right hand corner, please send your renewal ASAP so that you do not miss the next issue.

T-Shirts

I still have some L and XL long sleeve T-shirts available with the cool "Pavement Ends" graphic. After these are gone, there will be no more T-shirts made.

Quality Engine R&D Is Moving

Steve Kesselring is moving Quality Engine R&D to Alabama, but assures me that he will still continue to provide KL650 support once he gets his new shop set up. He has sold out of lowering links for the KLR650, but will make special runs of them, so be sure to call him if you need one and get on his

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list. Steve will have his new number listed when you call his older 717-596-3030 number. Good luck Steve.

Kawasaki 650 Owners Group?

Some of you with keen eyes noticed that the advertisement in Motorcycle Consumer News now reads "Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport Owners". That is not a mis-print folks. Starting September 1, we will officially be an owners group. That really doesn't mean much since we have been functioning as an owners group since this whole adventure started. The K650DSN will still exist as it does, we will have our annual rally and there will be a members list published. If you have any suggestions for other features of the group, be sure to let me know.

Tragedy Strikes the Ride To The Moon Team

A few issues ago, I told you about the adventures of the Ride To The Moon expedition, five men riding from California

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Central America: A Dual Sport Ride

Seven friends, all Pancho Villa Moto Tour veterans converged on Brownsville, Texas to begin a three week ride in Central America. The bikes included three Honda Transalps, one KLR650, two BMW GS models and one Ducati Elefant. We had been corresponding by email for over a month and were now ready to begin the trip south.

Transportation to Honduras was provided by an ocean going ferry that transported cargo and passengers from Port Isabel, Texas to Puerto Cortes, Honduras. The trip was scheduled to take two and a half days, arriving the morning of the third day. The ferry was twelve hour late departing as a 18 wheel container van had broken its front support legs and took about six hours to figure out how to haul it out! By this time it was dark and the fog had set in sowe were stranded for the night.

Accommodations on the ferry were much more then we had expected! A great dinning room, nice air-conditioned cabins, movies, sun deck and all the amenities of a small cruise ship. We were anxious to get going on the ride but happy to have such great accommodations to Honduras.

Arriving in Puerto Cortes was something out of a grade B movie! The port was very shabby, rusted containers laying around, junk all over the place, bananas waiting to be loaded on old freighters from various parts of the world and a general feeling of confusion was evident to all seven of us. Driving off the ferry caused a great deal of excitement among the people working the docks. I guess they could see us coming! We were surrounded by men who wanted to help us get through customs for a small tip! We found out quicklythe small tip was going to be around $300.00 per bike! We also found out that we had to use a helper to get through, it is their system and we were going to have to use it or get back on the ferry!

We finally negotiated our fee down to $85.00 per bike and reluctantly handed over our passports and bike papers to the helper. It was now about eight o'clock in the morning and we looked forward to riding out the gate by noon. As we sat there in the sun we began to notice that all the trucks and trains entering the port had armed guards with shot guns riding on the vehicles. Asking around we found out the in Honduras you are safe in the towns but once outside you are in what they called in Spanish no man's land!

Around two in the afternoon we were still waiting for our papers to be processed. At four we saw our man and had the papers. The official receipt was for $27.00 and the remainder of the $85.00 was used to speed along the system! This is Central America!

We had two hours of sun light and 120 miles to get to Copan, Honduras. We rode through town and headed out onto the highway with the final words of the customs man still in our minds ride fast, don't stop, and be sure you are there before dark. Don't stop at road blocks as the only people who use road blocks are the bandits.

The ride was going well until I heard a loud noise coming from my drive chain area. I had picked up some stalks from sugar cane and my chain had ridden off the sprocket and was hanging off the front sprocket. Luckily I had closed the clutch and prevented a lockup on the front sprocket. I pulled over and with the help of two other riders got the chain back on in a few minutes. Now it was almost dark and were rode as fast as we dared on the rode full of junk, kids and stalled out trucks. It was a beautiful ride with the excitement of the road, apprehension of the potential bandit problem and the beauty of the country side.

We finally entered Copan and located a hotel that turned out to be a real gem. Very Spanish Colonial type with great food, swimming pool and service.

The Copan ruins are one of the finest examples of the Mayan civilizations ability to build large cities with great structures, ball courts, pyramids and all the associated statues and reliefs one pictures in an ancient city. Truly fascinating to visit. The detail carvings of kings and gods makes one wonder how they could build and carve such wonderful objects.

Considering the Mayans did not use the wheel or have metal even compounds the wonder! We spend the day at Copan, hired a guide and enjoyed walking around the ruins.

Fortunately, the Honduras government has taken care to preserve the ruins. A large sheltered building has been built and most of the fragile statues and reliefs have been moved indoors to prevent erosion of the soft stone. Replicas of the items in the building are placed in the exact location outside where they were

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...Central America

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originally standing.

The next day we left Copan for the town of Coban, Guatemala. The ride to the boarder of Guatemala was on a nice dirt and gravel rode. Very scenic area in the jungle with many small villages along the way. The boarder crossing into Guatemala was very typical. A lot of talking with customs, forms to fill out, dust and heat, and a general feeling of being at the mercy of the boarder guards. The procedure was slow but steady and probably even professional compared to entering Honduras! We spent about two hours processing through and only paid $22.00 in fees for which we did receive a receipt!

Leaving the boarder we began a climb to higher elevation and the weather began to cool down as well as the humidity dropped considerably. Coban, with a population of about 20,000 people is an interesting town. The elevation of around 4,000 feet keeps it cool and misty most of the day and night. A Mayan town populated primarily by descendants of the

Mayan Culture.

We stayed one night here as we prepared for the next days ride across the Guatemalan highlands to Chichicastenango. The ride was only 90 miles in distance but took us ten hours to complete! Dirt and rock roads crossing two major mountain chains made travel slow -10 to 15 MPH at best! Passing through small Mayan villages always caused a stir -we stopped and talked with the people, drank lots of water and enjoyed the fantastic scenery of the Guatemalan highlands. At times, the road turned into a path and we had to basically idle through. The few stream crossings were exciting as we normally had to walk the bikes across with people on both sides holding the bike up as we motored across. The villagers loved being apart of this exercise and we gave a few of them a short ride as a reward for their work!

Chichi as it is called, has a population of 8,000 Mayan people. The elevation is close to 6,000 feet. A very interesting town, narrow cobblestone streets and a large, busy marketplace. Very few tourists here as it is rather difficult to get to unless you really want to be here! We enjoyed walking around the town but after a ten hour day on the bikes and traveling along dirt and rock roads we were ready for bed as we planned our ride into Mexico the following day.

The ride to San Christobal de Las Casas, Mexico in the state of Chiapas was fast and uneventful. Beautiful scenery and mountain roads made for a great ride. Crossing the boarder into Mexico was routine.

We spent two days in San Christobal de Las Casas as this is probably the best example of a Colonial Mexican city one would find. The buildings, plazas and churches were very typically old Spain in architecture. A great place to visit and definitely a city worthy of a return trip and extended visit.

At this point in the trip the group decided to split up as different agendas were evident. Four of us left the next morning and road cross country toward Veracruz. It took two days to arrive in Veracruz as the mountain roads we very slow traveling and we stopped often to take pictures and eat along the road. A great ride along the top of a number of mountain chains.

Veracruz was a very interesting stop. The history, forts, and plazas require more then a few days to appreciate. We spent a day and half here before traveling on to a town called Puebla about 100 miles east of Mexico City.

The Colonial nature of this city is fascinating. Churches, Plazas, and old streets that wind all through the town are full of interesting things to see. We wished we could stay here for a few days but the time was getting close and we had a few more things we wanted to do and see. We did visit the largest cathedral in Mexico here -a gigantic place with 21 separate chapels under the cathedral roof!

A short ride the next day brought us to the ruins of Teotihuacan. Located just north of Mexico City, these ruins are considered to be the largest and best excavated ruins in all Mexico. Aztec in nature, the difference from the Mayan ruins was readily apparent in the style and layout. Two gigantic pyramids overlooked a vast array of smaller structures. The pyramids are as large as the Egyptian pyramids and one can only wonder how and why they built them. The city dates back to 1,000 BC and has been home to three major cultures. The main avenue is over two and half miles long with structures on both sides the entire distance. It is estimated that over 140,000 people lived in this area during its peak period!

After a day at the ruins we traveled up to a great Colonial city called San Miguel de Allende. I have been there on a number of occasions but still

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to Argentina to raise fund for the Cancer Society and the Save the Children Foundation. Now I must tell you that tragedy has struck the team here in North America. Jason Martin or "Jay" as he was mentioned in the journals, died in a back country accident in his home country, Canada. Jay, as some of you may remember was a last minute addition to the expedition and eventually became the rider who soldiered out on his own to reach Argentina first. He was also the only rider to ride the 40,000 kilometers back to North America. Adding to this, David Baumgarten, also of the RTTM expedition was seriously injured in an accident when returning from Jay's funeral. Our hearts and prayers go out to all affected by these tragic events.

New Center Stand Bolts

Jake Jakeman has procured longer

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center stand mounting bolts that can be used to mount all of the available stands. The bolts are longer and will seat the blind shank in the frame mounts better than those previously offered. For more info, call Jake at Sage Brush Machine Shop 801-387-5575. While you're talking with Jake, ask him about the counter shaft sprocket shims he offers.

Apologies

Please accept my apologies for the lateness of this issue of K650DSN. A combination of vacation and a changing work schedule conspired to devour all of my available time and the July/August issue suffered as a result. Also, be forewarned that the September/ October issue will also be a couple of weeks late as I will be upgrading my computer system to better handle the new publishing software. After that, hopefully all of the following

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...Central America

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love this city more then any other place in Mexico. Very, very Colonial Spanish, and full of interesting streets, markets, cafes, and great little Spanish style hotels. We were there on Sunday and the Plaza and markets were packed with people on their traditional Sunday outing.

Our final destination was a small Hacienda called Santa Engracia. This Hacienda was built in 1713 but the original land grant was given to the Martinez family in 1540. The Hacienda is still in the Martinez family. It is located about a days ride from Brownsville and was our last stop.

We headed for the border the next day and had an uneventful ride as well as a routine boarder crossing back into the USA!

Looking back, I have to say this was a great trip. The roads, mountains, villages and Mayan people were all more then worth the trip. The experience was one that few people see first hand as traveling by motorcycle enhances the visual as well as the total feeling of being there!

We are already planning a trip for next year to concentrate on the Yucatan and Belize. Hopefully it will be as good as this one -I am sure it will!

Bill Haycock (Pancho Villa Moto tours staff rider)

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Rick Pelligrino

Dear Gino,

First, let me thank you for a fine job on the 650 newsletter. As a new KLR owner I am finding it very useful. You may remember me calling you last fall with a sad story of a rock that penetrated the crankcase of my KLR, somehow resulting in altered cam timing and bent valves. You referred me to Steve Kesselering who was incredibly helpful and had the only logical theory on what might have happened. As it turns out his theory did not pan out and I'm still left with a mystery. The bike is only just running again, but seems fine. I will include the details for your amazement. Additionally here is some windshield information you might be able to use. I am E-mailing you the text now; a hard copy with photos will be in the mail tomorrow.

Regarding the dual sport get together in Moab, our local BMW club is having their campout in Moab the weekend after and it is difficult for me to be away two weekends in a row, but I'd really like to do both. So as the date approaches I'll have a better idea of what I'm doing. Hope to get to meet you. Thanks

Windshields:

Enclosed you will find a couple of photos

BMW K75 Windscreen on a KLR650

of an interesting windshield modification the previous owner of my '95 KLR developed. What you see is a BMW K75S windshield slipped down into the unmodified KLR fairing.

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Reader Feedback

Dear Gino,

Sign me up for the Newsletter. I enjoyed the July/August and September/ October editions I received from a friend at church.

He got his KLR after seeing mine. I have a 95, his is a 96. I much prefer the dark blue color scheme over my green and purple splash. However, they run much the same and that's what counts. I came to the 650 after a 6 month tryout with a '94 Harley Fatboy. I am the typical mid-life returnee to motorcycling. I rode a Honda 450 for a few years in my 20's. Now that I am over 40, as with many baby boomers, the Harley looked great but was expensive and too uncomfortable. the KLR on the otherhand, was much more affordable and much more comfortable as well as versatile. I would never cruise the country roads of rock and mud on the Harley. For me, the KLR is also much less prestigious.

On a product note, I bought an extended windshield from Rifle. I have the 12 inch and it is a vast improvement over the stock screen, however at 6'3" tall, I could probably done better with the 21" screen.

I look forward to your newsletter.

Matt Johnson

Thanks Matt, I think the 21" Rifle screen would have been a little too much for the KLR's plastic fairing to handle - Ed.

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Dear Gino,

I was very interested in your letter in the April *Rider* magazine about your KLR newsletter. I have an '88 with 55,000 km on it and my son has an '89 with 14,000 km. We are both KLR enthusiasts. I use mine for commuting, running down to the store, etc. and it is my "all weather" bike.

My pampered baby is an '88 Concours with 105,000 km on it. Although my KLR is not cosmetically beautiful because of its all season use, it is as mechanically pampered as the Concours. I use Amzoil 100% synthetic in both bikes as it makes below freezing starts much more easier. After experimenting with tires, I have finally settled on Bridgestone TW22 rear and TW41 front. These are much less expensive than other street oriented dual purpose tires and wear as well. The only problem I've had with the KLR was a tendency to balk and sputter during hard acceleration. Eventually, after spending a lot of time on the carb, I found that the problem was in the sidestand cut out switch. When I by-passed that by unplugging it and stuffing the male end with tin foil, the problem disappeared. This winter I took apart the sidestand switch and found the spring loaded contact out of place. Now I've got the switch plugged in again and the bike is running fine.

My son's 89 KLR is his only bike and he uses it for touring as well as local use. Last fall he did a 3000km round trip to New York and is planning a trip to the west coast this summer. His bike had ME33/55A tires on it when he bought it, but he is going to try the TW 22/41 combo. Since he does much more freeway riding than I do, they may not work as well, we'll see.

Rob Tarks, Bridgewater, Nova Scotia

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Dear Gino,

SAVE THE TYPOS. After reeding two letters in the last isseue critical of typos and print quality contained in DSN I thought someone should inform the general readership that this newsletter is produced as a labor of love by one person, who in addition to the massive time commitment involved in putting together DSN also manages a full time job, a family and and all the other sorts of of mundane things necessary to maintain this toad rip we call a life. As I am relatively new to dualsporting and KLRE I greatly appreciate wealth the of information contained hairin. I am interested in con tent..l Glossy pages, the lack of concentrated brand specific info and full collor pica are wonderfool in general interest publications but that's not why I look forward to each issue of DSN. As for the complaint regarding the $15.00 script fee, that's 3 trips to Macdonalds. Let's get real here folks, $15.00 probably doesn't cover the cost of the mailing. If you'll keep up the good work I'll keep my thesaurus the on shelf.

Bruce Kentner

Thanx, Bruce. Glad too here soomeone out there can apriciate qaulity werk.

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(Continued on page 12)

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issues will be on time. Thanks for you patience.

Change of Plans

Not to sound like a broken record or anything like that, but my changing work schedule will also prevent me from attending the Thumper Rally in Wisconsin in early September. I will, however, be attending the Bavarian Mountain Weekend Rally in Sipapu, New Mexico, south of Taos and north of Mora. This is supposed to be a BMW event, but usually attracts all kinds of bikes. Usually between 300 and 350 bikes show up for the rally and I have found it to be "Brand X" friendly. Sipapu is located in the mountains of New Mexico, evenings are cool and days can be warm that time of year. A great rally to close out the summer. Give me a call if you plan on attending and we can "hook up".

In The Next Issue.

Aluminum Panniers

I've been talking about these forever, it

(Continued on page 11)

...Wind and Skid

(Continued from page 7)

The only modification is to drill three holes in the windshield for the stock mounting screws! You are left with two unused holes in the windshield which the previous owner filled with two bolts and two small 'clips' to hook onto the KLR fairing. I do not know the source of the clips, but a buddy of mine has installed the same windshield on his KLR without the clips and it seems plenty sturdy. Wind protection is excellent and there is no windshield deflection all the way up to 95mph indicated. Off road, I haven't noticed the tall shield, although I wonder if a shorter rider (I,m 6' 2') might not touch the chinbar of their helmet on the top of the shield during rough going. I carry the stock shield with me and change it right over when the mood strikes, leaving the tall shield in camp without strapping it to the top of my load.

A new shield is around $140.00, but my friend picked up a used one for $75.00.

'The Nightmare KLR' or **Skid Plates and Dealers':** Upon obtaining a slightly used '95 KLR 650, one of the first modifications I considered was a DG Products aluminum skidplate. Foolishly, I thought the stock item was probably adequate for awhile and instead decided to invest in protective gear for my body since I had been out of dirt riding for 13 years. This past November I heard/felt a thud while riding at about 30 mph on a smooth two-track, resulting in immediate engine shutdown. Three quarts of oil were now on the trail courtesy of a half-dollar size hole in the stock plastic skidplate, left inner case and main crankcase half. My welder buddy thought the chunk out of the crankcase could be welded, but it might be easier and cheaper to just replace the inner case. Calling the first Kawasaki dealer in the phone book I was told I had to purchase the entire crankcase set to get the left inner case ($600.00!!). Calling a second dealer resulted in a part number for the inner case and a $120.00 price tag. A call to Mike's Cycle Parts in Salem OR. located a nice used one for $65.00.

Oil drains freely from Rick's KLR after a rock punctures his crankcase. YIKES!

Dealer number two offered to weld the main crankcase, saying they had a welder with experience doing such things. Since I didn't have the flywheel puller necessary I just dropped it off. Two weeks later I go to pick up the machine, but they can't get it to fire. After checking the obvious, they find it has no compression. A bleed down test about blows the airfilter element out of the airbox. Removing the valve cover reveals the cam timing is incorrect and their conclusion is that the impact of the rock 'caused the timing chain to skip' resulting in bent intake valves! I gathered up the machine, ordered intake valves, flywheel puller, service manual and a head gasket and went home. A call to Steve Kesselering of Quality Engine R&D (featured in DSN) aquatinted me with a very friendly, helpful and knowledgeable person. If I ever decide to hop up my KLR Steve will be the guy to do it.

His most excellent theory was that the rock penetrated the sidecover, contacting the balancer and suddenly stopping it. This may have resulted, he thought, in the crankshaft mounted press fit sprocket to spin slightly. Since this sprocket also powers the cam chain, that would explain the change in cam timing. Upon inspection however, the sprocket was in the proper location, it's index mark lining up with the connecting rod at T.D.C.. I had two highly skilled mechanics inspect the engine and they also agreed that as per the shop manual the sprocket was in the proper position. To make it more interesting the cams AND the balancers were both out of time. Installing the two new intake valves was simple, but when I was ready to install the head, the gasket was incorrect! A call to the dealer elicited little sympathy over their mistake and a week later the correct gasket arrived.

Bolting it all together I discover I cannot get any valve clearance! A call to the dealer to check part numbers discovers that like the head gasket, the valves are also incorrect. I guess I should have checked the valve stem length, but never even considered they could be incorrect and visually they looked right. This time the dealer is 'really sorry' but other then offering to 'Red Label' the parts in and giving me a new head gasket, was in no way motivated to compensate me for this disaster. If I was the dealer, I think the parts at least would be free! At this point I was forced to drop out of a Baja trip that was planned for six months. As it turns out the valves are back-ordered and I have to wait another couple of weeks for them to arrive from Japan. After another teardown

(Continued on page 10)

... Wind and Skid

and reassembly the bike runs great. The only other theory that I have heard is that the dealer disassembled the cam chain and balancer chain during the welding process and re-assembled them incorrectly resulting in the valve strike. I can accept that they might have touched the balancer mechanism to better access the area to be welded, (they deny it) but there was no reason whatsoever to get into the cams. Any theories?

Moral: One - I will return to my policy of always doing my own work when possible and two -big DG skidplate; don't leave home without it.! By the way, the DG skidplate is a nice piece of work that fits well after some minor bending of the front U-bolt around the frame.

I have never really been much of a windshield person. I personally find most windshields annoying, they bounce and bob in front of you, you have to be careful when you clean

Rifle KLR screen about +7 inches above stock

Clearview shield in a +4 model

Windshields

Gino Pokluda

them or else they will look like the milky translucent lid to a tub margarine over time, and most windshields simply muddy up the air flow around the helmet area. Never the less, there are lots of K650DSN subscribers who write and call asking which is the best windshield for their bikes. So in my effort to fulfill the readerships desire to learn more about available windshield options, I began my research. What I learned was that KLR650 riders have two choices in bolt-on custom shields, Clearview and Rifle. KLX650, Tengai riders, and KLR650 riders who do not like the other two options have to basically fend for themselves.

Clearview offers a wide range of shields for various motorcycles. I talked with Greg at Clearview and ordered a +4 shield that was tinted, shortly before the Utah Get-Together. The shield arrived when promised, was crystal clear with no scratches or blemishes and bolted right onto the KLR with no problems. The +4 is four inches taller than stock and mounts to the fairing using the three existing screws that attach the stock wind screen and the two upper fairing mount bolts which give the Clearview five points of attachment. These five attachment points really firm up fairing on the KLR650, a feature I really liked. I road with the Clearview for about half of the trip and then sold it to another rider on a KLR. This was not a reflection on the shield, I just don't care for windshields. I can tell you that the Clearview +4 barely flexed in the stiff cross and ahead winds we experienced on our trip.

Rifle is the other custom shield maker for the KLR650. Rifle has taken a different approach than Clearview in the design of the windshield "system" as they call it. As the name indicates, the Rifle Windshield System utilizes two separate pieces, a base plate and a windscreen. The base plate is made of black ABS plastic and attaches to the fairing on the KLR650 using the same five points to mount as the Clearview shield, thus you get the same solidness of the fairing as with the Clearview. The base plate is formed to fit the fairing at the attachment point but the curve tightens where the windscreen attaches to the base plate. This is done to get the windscreen more upright and curved. Curiously, Rifle chose to use screws to mount the windshield portion to the base plate which offers a weak point in the system when compared to the one piece Clearview. I would have designed a deep groove into the baseplate into which the windshield could slide and then have bolts to secure it. Both Clearview and Rifle use the same thickness clear acrylic for the windscreen and offer custom sizing. Offroad riders should steer clear of tall windshields as they tend to shake and vibrate causing cracks and breaks at the mount points. Additionally, they are hard to see through when covered in dust and mud, which could pose a risk to rider.

The other option for additional wind protection is to supplement the current windscreen with a handlebar mount unit. I have seen this on both the KLR650 and the Tengai

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1st Annual Utah Get-Together

Gino Pokluda

On a warm sunny day in late April, seventeen intrepid riders showed up in Moab, Utah for the first annual Utah Get-Together , to ride some of the most scenic trails around and enjoy the company of other dual sport riders. I left Albuquerque with 3 fellow travelers, Sinjin Eberle, Ed Mignardot and Alex Stephianos and headed west for our destination of the the day, Squaw Flat campground at the southern end of Canyonlands National Park. Except for a stiff head wind, the trip up was uneventful. We stopped for lunch at Angel Peak lookout which provided us with a spectacular vista of the Bisti Badlands. Verga showers outside of Monticello kept us in our cool weather gear as we entered Utah for supplies and fuel. Once we dropped down in elevation, however, things began to warm up. We turned onto State Road 211 and headed to Newspaper Rock where we hooked up with Bogdan Swider, Mike Conners and Jake Jakeman. From there we rode through a spectacular valley to Squaw Flat. The sun was low in the sky and the reds of the canyon walls were rich and deep. As we approached the entrance booth, I saw a sign that made my hearty sink, CAMPGROUND FULL. This was really bad news, it was getting late and we needed water and a campsite. The park ranger informed us that campsites in the Park fill by noon but offered that there was some BLM land five miles back were people sometimes camp. After a little discussion, we decided the BLM land would be our best shot. We consolidated our water and sent part of the group for water while the rest of the group scouted out a campsite. The planned worked perfectly and we had a wonderful campsite amongst the red rocks and canyon walls. You couldn't have asked for a better evening, it was warm the stars were out and we had an unprecedented view of the Hale-Bopp comet.

The next day it was up and at-em. We packed up camp and headed to the Newspaper Rock for some pictures. While there we met up with Bill Daniell from Washington and Roy Cope from Los Alamos, New Mexico. From Newspaper Rock, we chuffed to the Needles Overlook which provides a panoramic view of the southern end of the Canyonlands. The grandeur of this National Park is beyond description and has become one of my most favorite places to visit. After some pictures we were on our way to Moab to meet the other riders. On the way in, one of the KLR's in the group began

First rest stop at Musselman Arch

having fuel supply problems, so we made a beeline for My Kawasaki. To be honest, My Kawasaki was a disappointment. While the owner was nice enough, she really did not seem to take an interest in the gathering of KLR's like I had hoped. With the fuel demons temporarily held at bay, we scooted over to the Super 8 Motel to check in and grab a bite for lunch.

After being sufficiently stuffed from Subway sandwiches, what else was there to do but go riding. We decided to get a little warm up ride in so we rode the Pucker Pass and Long Canyon trail. Some of us the rode over to Dead Horse Point State Park while others decided to ride Schaffer Trail through Potash back into Moab. Once back in Moab, we cleaned up, had a great dinner at the Moab Micro Brewery and turned in for the evening.

6:30 a.m. arrived too early the next morning as we prepared for the White Rim ride. After quick breakfast at the Denny's next door , we gave our bikes a once over. Alex's TDM850 blew out its fork seals the day before so he was planning to ride slowly back to Albuquerque. Two other bikes in the group were street only and would be touring that day which meant that fourteen bikes would be plunging deep into Canyonlands for a 143 mile trip. I would be leading a short ride for some riders while Steve "Mr White Rim" Johnson would would lead the balance of the group on his TDM850. The mere thought of a TDM850 dancing in the rocks sent a chill up my spine, but Steve is not your typical rider, this guy is good.

The first leg of our ride was to Mussleman Arch, about 15 miles from Moab. A great warm up ride for the riders going the entire distance, Mussleman would serve as the turn-around point for the short tour. Mussleman Arch is a spectacular arch several hundred feet above the

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seems like. But they are a reality. Frank Doerr Equipment, Jesse Luggage Systems, and Hepcko and Becker all have or will have aluminum luggage systems available for the KLR50, Tengai and possibly the KLX650 in the near future.

The next issue of Dual Sport Alliance will feature the long awaited KTM Adventure bike.

Advertising policy

You will notice that *K650DSN* now has some advertising in it. The current advertising policy is basically the same for all subscribers; If you subscribe you can advertise for a year. While this may seem like a rather strange way of doing business, I do have method to my madness. Buy only requiring the usual subscription rate for advertising, I eliminate the chance of being dependent on advertisers and running the risk putting the *K650DSN* in jeopardy should an advertiser decide to pull out of the publication. Since this policy is so lax, I reserve the right to limit the size and content of each advertisement.

Parts Through K650DSN

Parts are available at

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...Feedback

(Continued from page 8)

Dear Gino,

Please post in the KLR Newsletter. Recently completed a 4,000 mile excursion in Mexico. It was all on pavement, although you really can use a DP bike on some of the roads. There were absolutely no problems. I recommend Mexico for the people, places and prices. My '93 KLR has a little over 23,000 miles. At speeds 70-80 mph it burns oil at a rate of about a quart in 400-1000 miles. Below 70 mph it varies but generally about a quart in 1500-2500 miles.

I have two questions. First, is the oil consumption average for the mileage and speeds? Second, I am planning a trip to Brazil and wonder what is the life of the engine? I have heard valves are a problem at 30,000 and engine life of a single cylinder is about 40,000 because of stress on bearings. By the time a start the trip the bike will probably have 25-30,000 miles and I wonder if it is really going to make it without problems. Anyone with experience on the "trouble-free" service life of the engine.

Thanks,

J. Maloney, Los Angeles, CA.

J.

It sounds to me like your engine needs some work. The oil consumption figures you specify are not normal and could prove dangerous to an engine that only carries 2.5 liters of oil. In good working order and with reasonable care, there is no reason why a liquid cooled single should not be able to go more than 50K miles without a major maintenance.

******

Hi Gino,

My local Kawasaki dealer, who happens to be hemorrhoid, swears to me that if I run anything other than motorcycle oil in my venerable beast, I could do damage to the engine. I questioned him about high quality synthetics (Castrol Syntec, Mobil 1, etc.) and he still said "can't do it". I have run Castrol GTX in my '76 Triumph for 2 decades without oil related failure. Is his assertion valid, is he trying to make me buy his stock, which happens to be all

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ARROWHEAD MOTORSPORTS
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2970 Desert Rd.
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.....Updates

(Continued from page 11)

a discounted price through an agreement with **R&S Kawasaki** in Albuquerque, NM. the KLR knowledgeable parts guys will be more than happy to UPS your parts to you. Tell them you are a subscriber to K650DSN and receive a 10% discount on your order. **R&S Kawasaki 505-292-6692.**

Second Annual Utah Get-Together

For those who like to plan well in advance, we will be having another rally next year in Utah, most likely Moab. Fred Hink of Arrowhead Motorsports has graciously offered to assist in organizing the rally. Fred, an avid off-roader himself, knows the trails like the back of his hand and will help develop self guided rides for all levels of riders. He has also offered to have his shop serve as a meeting place where folks can get info and pick up packets. Stay tuned for more info.

...Windshields

(Continued from page 10)

and believe it would be a no-brainer for the KLX650.

I had a full sized National Cycle Plexi-Fairing on my KLR600 for winter riding and a small National Cycle Street Shield on my Suzuki DR650. Both had quick release hardware and could be removed easily for offroad riding. The KLR650 and the Tengai would both need a shield that has no lowers like the Street Shield while the KLX could use a full style like the Plexi-Fairing. Elsewhere in this issue, you will see an article by Rick Pelligrino where he modified a BMW K75 windscreen to fit his KLR650. I like that approach as windshield will eventually scratch and nick, so why not start with a used one especially on a DP bike. It just goes to show you that when it comes setting up a bike to fit your needs, there is no substitute for a little imagination.

Clearview Shields can be reached at 1-800-798-6089. Rifle products can be purchased through your local motorcycle accessory shop or dealer.

.....Feedback

(Continued from page 12)

Yamaha oils (non-synthetic), or am I just suffering from a recto-cranial inversion (my head up my #$%). I've been running Yamaha 20W40 since purchase of the bike and have no complaints. I'm just suspicious of his motives and decrees.

Jake, Delray Bch, Fl

Jake,

As far as I'm concerned, the jury is still out on synthetic oils. I have not read any conclusive studies that indicate that synthetics are 'better' than conventional motor oils. Mechanics that I talk to are divided on the benefits if any on synthetics. As for conventional oil versus motorcycle formulated oil, all I can tell you is that you have to approach it on a case by case basis. Like you, I used to use Castrol exclusively in my bikes. Then, some of my newer bikes, the KLR included, began having sticky shifting. When I switch to motorcycle oil, the problem went away. So as a rule, I try conventional Castrol (in the proper weight) then switch to motorcycle oil if I notice problems. -Ed.

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Hi Gino,

The battery wasn't ready until about 3:30 p.m. on Monday so I decided to stay the night in Moab and leave on Tuesday morning. Bill Daniell was kind enough to stay also. I passed you guys a few miles west of Blanding. The ride from Moab through Hanksville and Escalante was the most beautiful I have ever been on.

The weather was perfect and there was no traffic. I camped in Zion National Park on Tuesday night. On Wednesday I went through a thunderstorm near the Nevada/ Utah border. Lightning was striking all around me and the rain was heavy. Once a bolt of lightning struck just to my left and caused five horses to bolt across the road right in front of me. I was only going about 40mph so it wasn't a problem. After the rain ended the winds came. I had 40 knot crosswinds from Caliente, NV to Hawthorne, NV. where I spent the night. One gust blew my magnetic tank bag right off. I decided to motel it in Hawthorne and I'm glad I did because it snowed that night. The trip over the Sierras the next day was cold but the weather had cleared up and there was still no traffic so I made good time. East of Sacramento I hit the Traffic. Welcome back to California. I used the freeway for about 50 miles to make better time and I wish I hadn't. I got home in Ukiah on Thursday afternoon.

The trip put 2728 miles on my odometer and I averaged 48 mpg. Except for the dead battery on the White Rim ride the bike never missed a beat. I contribute the low mpg to the extra load I was carrying. I usually get about 55mpg on a trip. I thank the Corbin seat, the Rifle fairing, and the Vista cruise throttle lock for making the trip so nice. My butt never got sore and my right hand still worked at the end of each day. The Rifle fairing flaps around quite a bit in turbulent wind and I had to hold it with my left hand sometimes for fear that it might break off. I think I might cut it down or fabricate a smaller windshield for it. The Jansport day pack saddlebags I fabricated were OK but need a little more work to be perfect. If the center stand I ordered from Capitol Cycle ever arrives I will be able to lube the chain without the Rube Goldberg setup I devised to keep the rear wheel off the ground. By the way, I used Maxima chain wax and I am very happy with this product for both on and off road travel.

Will I make a trip like this again? You bet. I have been bitten by the motorcycle tour bug. If the White Rim ride turns out to be an annual event, I will be there every year.

Keep up the great work on the newsletter, It has already exceeded all my expectations.

Eric

******

Dear Gino,

I bought my KLX in January and have put 4500 miles on it in four months. I love it. Listed below are some tips that may be useful for both KLR and KLX riders.

While on an offroad ride I had the misfortune to break my 1996 KLX650C's clutch mount in a particularly nasty fall (inversion, actually). Luckily, my wife (a dual-sporting accountant!) had two automotive water hose type clamps holding her university parking pass to the front fork of her DR200. I was able to connect the two clamps end-to-end and use them as one long clamp to hold my poor clutch mount on the handle bar to ride the bike home. I now ride with two of these clamps around my fork just in case.

Also, I found a solution for the metal shift lever induced wear and tear to my office-worthy boots (I ride to work daily unless it's raining). I bought a length of 3/4 inch heat shrink tubing from Lowes hardware store (Dennis Kirk catalog sells it too) and cut a piece just long enough to cover the metal pedal section of the shift lever and protrude ½ inch. Several minutes with a Bic lighter was enough to mold the tubing tightly to the shift lever. After several months and several thousand miles the lever and my boots are holding up just fine.

As for Slick 50 ...Although controversial, I did it and synthetic oil. After 1000 miles with it the bike seems to shake less at low RPM and even seems quieter (!?). I have buddy with a KLX who confirms the same results.

Dave Sumner
sumner.david@epamail.epa.gov

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Dear Gino,

Here's a life saver for KLX owners: S(w)eat Relief! In desperation I augmented my KLX seat this weekend and

(Continued on page 14)

..... and more Feedback

was amazed at the results. I purchased a 2' by 3' piece of 2" foam (low quality) from a local piece goods store for about $10, and a 3' by 4' section of vinyl from an upholstery shop for $3.50.

Because I wasn't sure this would work, I very carefully remove each staple holding the original seat cover. Having removed and gently set aside the stock cover, I pulled the foam fairly loosely over the existing foam and marked the new foam where it reached the edge of the seat pan.

After cutting the new foam with a pair of scissors I stretched it very tightly over the existing foam and stapled it to the seat pan (3/8" staples, but they may not be long enough to hold over time). The hard part was stretching the vinyl tightly enough to fit the seat like the stock cover. I used the heat from our gas logs to make the vinyl more plyable and took great pains to avoid folding the vinyl around the corners (like a wrapped gift).

The result is much cushier and wider seat (those of you who ride KLR's already have a wide cushy seat by KLX standards!) that remained comfortable over my 200 mile trip to visit Mom on Mother's Day. My buddy Mike (fellow KLX owner) claims the seat looks as good as the stock seat even though it does not say "Kawasaki" on the side and does not have the lean, square shoulders of the stock seat (part of the KLX problem).

Please direct questions to "sumner.david@epamail.epa.gov" or call me at 919-677-0347. I can send pictures if there is any interest.

Dave.

******

Dear Gino,

Just thought I'd send an "at-a-boy" your way to help balance out some of the criticism you received in the May-June issue. While the finished appearance of this newsletter will probably never approach that of "Cycle World," it must be remembered that creating a slick product isn't the purpose of DSN. The purpose of DSN (at least as I see it) is to give us dual-sport enthusiasts a means for sharing ideas, experiences, and techniques pertaining to this little exposed and under-appreciated type of riding. At that, it already excels. So come on folks, lighten up and don't lose the forest for the trees. Take whatever's useful, send in what's missing, and blow off the aesthetics!

Juan Villarreal

******

Dear Gino,

I did two major changes to the bike this winter. The first thing I did was install the "poor mans" jet kit. I am very pleased with the results even though the economy may not be quite as good as stock. I don't worry so much about that with the big tank. I have to say that even though this bike isn't a rocket, it is starting to perform like the thumper I had hoped for. I will probably install some of R&D's engine improvements next winter to get it to really run.

To go along with the jetting, I installed the R&D lowering kit. (One piece of advice if you do this: it is a very easy task if you remove the rear wheel first. That really helped me out when the top bolt didn't want to budge. It's a lot easier setting behind the bolt than beside it.) I can't recommend this change enough. Now the bike handles REALLY well.

One big improvement that I have found is that it's not as affected by cross winds as when stock. I was skeptical about how this change would help, but I did it so that my wife could ride the bike if she wanted, and now I'm not so sure I'll let her.

I seem to be happier with this bike every season. I'm very glad that Gino started this newsletter as it has helped me with some good modifications. And to respond to Douglas M. who wrote that he didn't think that $15 was worth spending for this kind of help; If you can't get $15 worth of advice in this type of single model environment, then all I can say is "don't complain that you don't have enough input on making your ride a better one".

I also saw a letter about bar vibration. I have added a bar-snake AND heavy bar end weights. I don't get that tingling after long rides like I used too. Get the heaviest weights though as I tried the lighter versions and was not pleased. I plan to try aluminum bars next to see if that helps.

Thanks again, and keep up the good work. I do like the new format. It looks more professional, but don't get too carried away as I like the personal approach that you offer.

Ron Crandell

******

Gino,

I am KLR owner. Just completed a 4,800 mile ride across the High Andes of Chile, Argentina, Peru and Bolivia. Bike worked great! Only failure was the gear shifter due to a weak weld. I understand there is an after market fix for this. The bike really showed its dirt bike heritage on miles of deep sand, long stream crossings and rough roads up to 15,000' in elevation. Couldn't have asked for a better mount. I was a BMW rider from day 1 but now I am a convert. I hear there is a centerstand available. Do you think it will stand up to severe abuse without coming off? If so I'd like to have some details. Looking forward to communicating with you and other KLR owners (I'm buying another one if I can get the 5-star mounts for GiVi system). Best regards,

Frank Campbell

***K650DSN* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity or length. Please send letters to PO Box 698, Sandia Park, NM 87047. If you do not want your letter to be printed, please be sure to mention it in your text.**

.... Get-Together

(Continued from page 11)

The pack stops along the Green River before the long ascent out of the Canyonlands

canyon floor. It is wide enough to walk across and even.. gulp.. ride your bike across as a two-stroker did while we stopped for a break. I lead my group out of the canyon via Schaffer trail while the others continued on their journey to their exit point, Horse Thief Pass. Once I delivered the short tour riders safely to Moab, I doubled back and raced to Horse Thief Pass.

Meanwhile, deep in the canyon, bike problems were rearing their ugly heads for the long ride crew. A KLR had a fried battery and a DR350/400 was burning oil at an alarming rate. But the resourcefulness of the dual sport rider is not to be underestimated. The KLR was simple bump started and everyone took turns lying down in front of on coming four wheelers to make them stop so the DR rider could beg for oil. Everyone's spirits remained high, however, buoyed by the inspiration to us all; Bill Daniell who, at 73 years young, was cruising along the White Rim aboard his Tengai as if he had done it all before.

After a wrong turn at Mineral Wells, I finally picked my way to Horse Thief Pass and descended into the Canyon. I fully expected to meet up with the other riders early into my descent but after I had traveled 10 miles into the canyon I knew they had had problems. I decided to stop along the Green River where I had a great vantage point of the trail. I would be able to see them coming and get some pictures as they rounded a nice bend. After about 20 minutes, the quite gurgling of the river and rustling of the leaves was broken by the sound of big thumpers racing along the trail. Within seconds the air was filled with the dust and the familiar exhaust note of KLR's. Everyone stopped for a break and to exchange conversation about the ride before the ascent out of the canyon. The climb out of the canyon was uneventful and at the rim, we were met with the type of road big dual sports love; fast, wide, graded dirt. The group of riders I was with routinely hit 70 mph with long plumes of red dust trailing from our bikes. Gotta love it. That evening we dined at Eddie McStiff's micro brewery where Mexican food and beer never tasted so good. After dinner we handed out some of the great door prizes donated by Rick from R&S Kawasaki and turned in for the evening.

The next morning found some riders heading out in all different directions. One group departed for Escalante while another went for more dual sport abuse in Lockhart Basin. Eric Mercer was left trying to hunt down a new battery for his KLR. That's when we discovered Fred Hink of Arrowhead Motorsports. Fred is an avid dirt rider in the Moab area and is probably more familiar with all of the trails than anyone else and has volunteered to help out at next years Utah Get-Together , but more on that later. Anyway, Fred was extremely helpful in getting Eric back on the road, for which we are all grateful. My group of riders headed south to Natural Bridges National Monument, where we spent the night in some of the cleanest campsites I have ever seen. While there, we took a short tour out to Mexican Hat and the Goosenecks of the San Juan, spectacular scenery to say the least.

On our last day of the trip we learned of an approaching winter storm and decided to make time heading back home. We broke camp and headed south towards Bluff, were we picked up lunch supplies and fuel. We then made a brief stop at Sand Island, another location of fantastic petroglyphs. The wind really picked up by mid morning and we had a stiff headwind as we headed towards New Mexico.

By the time we reached US 666, the crosswind must have been 30-40mph and our light dual sports were being blown all over the road. We tanked up in Bloomfield and I recorded the absolute worse mileage my KLR650 has ever returned, 37 mpg. We stopped for lunch again at Angle Peak where we had to anchor our lunch bags and such to the table with heavy rocks. To avoid the wind which seemed to get worse as the day wore on, we decided to take make a bee-line for home with no more stops.

Stop along Schaffer trail *(more photos on last page)*

All in all, it was one great trip. A trip that only a big dual sport could pull off. As it looks now, you should be able to safely plan a return to Moab in 1998 for our Second Annual Dual Sport Get-Together.

Dual Sport Alliance

BMW National Rally: Fredricksburg, Texas

I have attended a great number of rallies, but some of the most interesting have to be the BMW rallies that I have been to. I don't know if it is the sheer enthusiasm that these riders approach life with or the way they seek to wring the most out of the motorcycle experience, but I defy anyone to go to a BMW rally and leave without say "That was interesting" to themselves.

Unfortunately, I was unable to ride to this rally as it was squeezed into a very busy family vacation. Between helping my parents clean up part of their farm from debris deposited from torrential rain just days before and a mad dash to the Gulf coast, I managed to sneak over to Fredricksburg for a day with my nephew, an aspiring motorcyclist, himself. This was not going to be a picnic, however, because I was on a mission to find anything and everything geared towards dual sports.

The rally sprawled out over the beautiful grounds of the Lady Bird Johnson Park outside of Fredricksburg, which meant a great deal of walking was in order. I consider myself to be a fairly fit individual, but the heat and humidity had reduced me to a sniveling weenie by the time we made it to the first tent which was the BMW Demo tent. Ah, let's see, what do we have here? F650? Been there, done that. K1200RS? Not interested. BMW Cruiser? All right! Now we're talking. I threw a leg over the big cruiser and sat in it's plush saddle. The convertible pillion seat/back rest coddled my lower back. It was like someone put handlebars on an old Buick Roadmaster. I sat there and imagined the road disappearing under the meaty rear tire. Nothing but the huge fuel tank and horizon in front of me. Screw the custom saddle bags, lash a duffel to the rear rack, put on an open face helmet and some goggles and let the miles roll... huh? Oh.. yeah, I'm sorry. Yes, you can sit on the bike now.

Seconds after leaving the shade of the demo tent, I was whimpering about the humidity again. We made are way to the next tent. This one said "Beer Garden" on it. Soon, I didn't care about the heat or humidity. As a matter of fact I didn't care about much at all. Refreshed by a couple of cold ones, we ventured, undaunted into the mass of motorcycles seeking out unique dual sport bikes. R1100GS's were the most prevalent followed by the various R100GS models. Keen eyes, however, could seek out the prize among BMW DP bikes, the R80GSPD. Several very fine examples were spotted throughout the premises.

R80GS Paris Dakar: The original adventure bike

Homemade R75 GS: Is this what GS riders wanted?

Brand X dual sports were well represented also. When we were driving in, I spotted a MuZ Country with factory panniers, rare indeed. There were also some very nice Transalps attired with desert bars, saddlebags and large windshields. KLR650's held there own also at the Rally also. One KLR had full Givi luggage and a Rifle screen. Another appeared to be stock except for what I thought was an aftermarket muffler. Upon closer inspection I found that it was the stock muffler but polished to a high sheen. When I talked with the owner, he said he simple doused the muffler with paint stripper, stripped all of the paint off and then buffed the stainless steel underneath. An afternoon job and a great looking muffler; can't beat that. The exotic dual sport scene was rounded out by the token Triumph Tiger, a Ducati E900 and a Cagiva Elefant 750.

The bikes that really caught my eye lurked in the dark shadows of a twisted oak tree. As I walked up to them, I could hear the hushed murmurs of their riders, tatooed with cigarettes dangling in their mouths. Unwary poseur GS riders scurried away when they realized they were to close to this renegade group of riders and their mounts. To the untrained eye, the bikes were simply beaten and abused older R series Boxers. But close inspection told the enthusiast that these machines were built with purpose and precision. Massive White Power inverted forks where mated to lightened Boxer chassis. The typical BMW single sided swing arm was replaced with custom built extended two sided swing arm with twin long travel shocks. The only

.....Fredricksburg

Another homegrown GS. Note 9.3 gallon nylon fuel tank

body work on the bikes were their fuel tanks and seats. One machine had a rare 9.3 gallon translucent Acerbis nylon tank. Others had dented tanks from various R bikes. Yes, these were my kind of bikes. I talked with the riders at length about there steeds. Most of them built their own machines, while others enlisted the help of friends. One thing was for sure, the bikes were built and used for dual sport riding. Perilli MT21 DOT knobbies were the tire of choice for this group. The bike with the huge fuel tank sported a rear tire that had a few of the knobs torn right off the tire; a testament to the rear wheel torque the beast could produce. All claimed wet weights of under 400 pounds.

Time was running short and we made our way to the accessory tents. The place was buzzing with activity. Tire vendors were mounting tires as fast as they could as lines of bikes waited to be shod. In one of the tents, I noticed a tank bag that would be excellent for the KLR650 or any dual sport for that matter. It's called the Elefant Boy and it is imported from Germany by Bob's BMW 1-303-924-5155. The bag has a slanted base that would fit the steeply angled KLR650 tank just right. I also saw Al Jesse, of Jesse Aluminum Panniers at the Rally. He had a very nice set of aluminum panniers fitted to a BMW F650. When we began speaking about other dual sport bikes, he suggested that he may begin making his wonderful detachable aluminum panniers for other bikes, like the KLR650. Oh, I hope, I hope, I hope.

Before I knew it, it was time to head back to chores at the farm so my nephew and I made our way back to the pickup. On our way out we were treated to the sight and sound of a Boss Hoss; a Chevy 350 V8 with a motorcycle built around it. "Oh well", I told my nephew as we walked by. "It's like I said when we walked in here", I sighed. "It takes all kinds".

Al Jesse aluminum panniers on an F650. KLR650's could be seeing these soon.

Decked out KLR650. Note full Givi luggage, low front fender and Rifle windshield.

My nephew on the Beemer Cruiser. Gotta have one of these.

Last Minute Stuff

Paul Cain Back from Alaska
Paul Cain made it to and back from Alaska safely. He says his KLR, featured in the May/June issue of *K650DSN* performed flawlessly. Look for a complete article in a furture issue.

Jim Fourtney on to Alaska
Jim Fourtney is on his way to Alaska. Jim's bike is sporting a Corbin seat and some real nice aluminum equipment bags that he custom built mounts for. These will be in the aluminum bag issue.

Elden Carl going to Baja
Elden Carl will be going to Baja in November and invites subscribers who might be interested in joining him. Give Elden at 619-440-2960.

***K650DSN* Now Has a Web Page**
With a great deal up help from subscriber Pat Hensely, We now have a forum on the World Wide Web. The Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News homepage resides at http://members.aol.com/k650dsn. The page is still very much under construction, but please check it periodically as it will be upgraded over the next few months.

Haves, Wants and Needs

For Sale 1995 KLR650, excellent condition 4k miles. Progressive springs, GP110 tires. $3,500.00. Call Bruce Kentner 505-892-0032

For Sale Al Jesse aluminum panniers for R1100GS. very good condition. Call Arlen Aas 320-587-0728

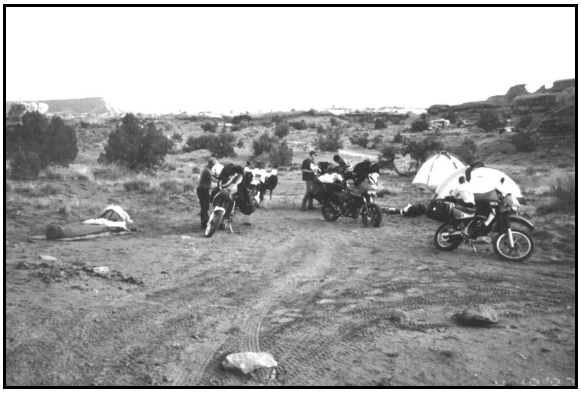
Need Place to keep bike in Costa Rica. Call Arlen Aas 320-587-0728

For Sale As of 8/1 1993 KLR650. 8.5K miles. Corbin and OEM seat. Rifle windscreen, Maier brush guards, kick starter installed, 6000 mile service done 1/97, new brake pads, oil and filter 7/97, Avon Gripsters with 3500 miles, spare Metzeler Enduro 3 front/rear with 3000 miles, Top of the Line rear rack, Tim Bernard side braces, Ortlieb (Dry Bags) saddlebags, tank panniers, service manuals. Spares include 2 helmets, throttle and clutch cables, chain, more. $2500.00 call 508-991-8807. Hank Olden

Utah Get-Together Memories

Left - Wrenching along the White Rim Trail

Right - Setting up camp on BLM land outside of Canyonlands



Left - Steve Johnson and Alex Stephianos wrench on Steve's TDM850 a.k.a "The Beast"

Right - A fast stretch of trail along the Green River